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ABSTRACT

The Student Outcomes Assessment Program (SOAP) at Pima Community College (PCC) in Arizona has six major components: (1) the use of success indicators to assess the college's success in achieving its mission; (2) a classroom assessment mini-grant program designed to support faculty research with a direct effect on learning; (3) the use of general education curriculum designation as a mechanism to incorporate formal student outcomes assessment into a major curriculum reform; (4) occupational curriculum renewal using the DACUM (Developing A CUrriculuM) process; (5) program and service reviews; and (6) the collection of student information system data. For the final component data were collection through a minority student retention and transfer study, a study of concurrent enrollment at PCC and the University of Arizona, employer surveys, graduate satisfaction surveys, and various other surveys. A vital SOAP component is the dissemination of research results to appropriate constituencies within the college, a charge of PCC's College Research and Information Steering Committee. In order to reach all segments of the college, which comprises five campuses and a district central office, multiple means are being used to publicize the SOAP and related student outcomes assessment activities. These include a multi-dimensional publicity campaign, widespread distribution of draft documents and final reports, meetings with governance groups, campus forums on research projects, and special involvement with the accreditation agency. College department chairs will provide academic leadership in evaluating, expanding, and improving the SOAP. (KP)

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Student Outcomes Assessment Plan

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PimaCountyCommunityCollegeDistrict

Institutional Effectiveness Series : 5

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Purpose, Philosophy, and Approach 2

Establishing the Student Outcomes Assessment Program 3

Mission Success Indicators 3

Classroom Mini-Grants 4

General Education Curriculum Designation 4

Occupational Curriculum Renewal Using the DACUM (Developing A CUrriculuM) Process 5

Program and Service Review 5

Student Information System Data 6

Minority Student Retention and Transfer Study 6

UA/PCC Concurrently Enrolled Student Study 7

Employer Surveys: 7

A. 1992 Needs Assessment Results 7

B. 1992 Employer Satisfaction Study 8

Graduate Satisfaction Surveys 9

Other Studies 9

Summary and Analysis 10

Supporting the Student Outcomes Assessment Program 12

Managing Outcomes Data and Assessment Results 12

Publicizing Student Outcomes Assessment 13

Summary and Analysis 14

Expanding and Improving the Student Outcomes Assessment Program 15

Evaluating and Revising the Initial Program 15

Institutionalizing the Program 15

Summary and Analysis 16

Conclusion: Overall Summary and Analysis 17

Relationship of the Plan to the Mission, Goals, and Objectives of the Institution 17

Evidence that the Institution's Plan is Articulated and Institution-Wide in Conceptualization and Scope 18

Relationship of the Plan to Institutional Improvement 18

Timetable for Implementing the Plan 18

Administration of the Plan 19

Introduction: Purpose, Philosophy, and Approach

Pima Community College has conducted extensive student outcomes assessment activities for many years—both quantitative and qualitative, formal and informal, one-time and ongoing. They include institutional and departmental studies or surveys to satisfy the requirements of government and accrediting agencies, to support grant activities, and to improve specific areas of instruction and instruction-related services. They also include unofficial classroom research by individual faculty. These activities have contributed to the College's reputation for innovation and concern for students, but until recently they were not organized into a comprehensive program leading to systematic institutional improvement.

Since the 1990 Self-Study, the College has recognized the value of an integrated, comprehensive student outcomes assessment program, based on the belief that student achievement is the principal indicator of success for the entire institution and each of its components. The primary purpose of the assessment program described in this plan is to improve education through the systematic collection and application of data. It will also recognize and validate the efforts of faculty and other College personnel to provide students with increasingly meaningful educational experiences.

The goal of this plan is to produce an effective Student Outcomes Assessment Program through the following steps (which are not necessarily consecutive, since their activities will often overlap):

- ***Establishing A Student Outcomes Assessment Program*** by drawing together existing outcomes assessment activities and their results to form the core of an integrated,ongoing improvement program,
- ***Supporting The Program*** by 1) developing a central repository for student outcomes information and coordinating its use, and 2) publicizing the assessment program and its results to promote collegewide understanding and participation,
- ***Expanding And Improving The Program*** until it is comprehensive and self-perpetuating by 1) evaluating and revising the initial program and 2) establishing a mechanism for continuous evaluation and improvement.

These steps provide for the timely development of a viable, self-renewing Student Outcomes Assessment Program, with the following characteristics:

- It will use multiple outcomes measures and will respond to the great variety of educational services and approaches that have been designed for a large, diverse student body on five campuses.
- It will be permanently linked with the Mission Review and Program and Service Review processes as educational practices are periodically reexamined in light of the College mission and specific program, subject area, and service missions, as well as the latest student outcomes data.
- As it evolves, it will be shaped and re-shaped by the faculty, led by department chairs and campus deans.
- It will include reconsideration of significant instructional issues such as basic skills assessment, developmental coursework, and the role of standardized achievement tests.
- It will include student development and instructional support as well as direct instructional outcomes. Systematic efforts to measure the success of student development and instructional support services will begin in the 1994/95 academic year, when information on academic outcomes will provide a basis for assembling useful data related to services.

This report will describe the major steps of the plan, including what has been accomplished to date. It will also analyze the effectiveness of the program currently in place and the soundness and appropriateness of the strategies to improve it.

Establishing The Student Outcomes Assessment Program

The current Pima Community College Student Outcomes Assessment Program has six major components. Three of these components – Mission Success Indicators, Program and Service Review, and Student Information System Data – contributed to student outcomes assessment before the College began to identify a formal outcomes assessment program in 1992/93. They form the core of the initial program. The remaining three were developed in 1993 to fill out the initial program in the following ways:

- The classroom mini-grant program was specifically designed as a campus-based student outcomes assessment activity giving recognition and support to faculty research with a direct effect on learning.
- General education curriculum designation was used as a mechanism to incorporate formal student outcomes assessment into a major curriculum reform begun by a general education task force before the 1989/90 Self-Study.
- The DACUM process was established to update and revitalize occupational curriculum by identifying outcomes objectives as an adjunct to program review.

All the components of the present program either contribute data or provide the means to collect data for analysis leading to improvements in student learning. Much of that analysis occurs within the Program and Service Review process, and all assessment results are validated and applied within that process by departmental faculty, student development and instructional support faculty, and support staff.

As the initial outcomes assessment program was being implemented, institutional research data were refocused on student outcomes within Program and Service Review, mission success review, and other assessment processes. Before that time, basic student information was routinely collected and presented in an annual College *Factbook*. Beginning with the compilation of 1992/93 data, which will appear in February 1994, the *Factbook* will contain a special section devoted to student outcomes assessment information. The latest *Factbook*, in the new format, will be available to the NCA Evaluation Team during the Focused Visit.

In addition, completed major research projects – described later in this document – are being applied to improvement activities. Unfinished major studies, as well as completed projects on a smaller scale that are yet to be identified, will be added to the outcomes assessment program when it is expanded.

Descriptions of the main components of the Student Outcomes Assessment Program follow.

Mission Success Indicators

Pima Community College reviews its mission and reports to the community annually. Approximately every five years it conducts a comprehensive evaluation with broad-based community involvement. This evaluation produces success indicators based on elements of the mission that reflect the needs and expectations of the College's publics. The success indicators are then used to measure the degree to which the College is succeeding in fulfilling its mission.

The first comprehensive review was conducted in 1990 by approximately 100 participants – half from the College and half from the community. The review committee:

- assessed the current mission statement by examining success indicators of previous years,
- identified topic areas that are or should be expressed as major commitments in the statement,
- modified the statement, and
- developed success indicators, with measurable outcomes, in each area identified.

After every comprehensive review, the Office of Research and Planning provides data annually from a variety of sources including survey and registration information to substantiate the degree of progress made in each area of performance. The Chancellor reviews these outcomes and presents a progress report to the community. The most recent progress report, entitled *Mission Success Indicators: Outcomes Status, Spring 1993*, is available from the Office of Research and Planning.

Campus provosts and deans, and central offices responsible for the outcomes areas, in cooperation with Institutional Research, provide data for the annual report, analyze the information, and develop plans for improvement. During the program review process, faculty consider mission outcomes information as it applies to their programs or disciplines and indicate what changes they intend to make based upon the aggregate data.

Thus, the published results of mission statement review provide a high level of public accountability for the College. They challenge faculty, key staff members, and administrators to maintain or improve on their successes from year to year. They also reveal needs to develop strategies for measuring performance where these are lacking.

Classroom Assessment Mini-Grants

Since Spring 1993, the College has used financial and recognition incentives to promote classroom research and assessment by individual faculty members.

The Provosts' Classroom Research Mini-Grant Program provides opportunities for faculty to formally investigate learning outcomes in their classes, in related disciplines, or across disciplines. The purpose is to encourage individual faculty to identify curricular outcomes, analyze methods for meeting those outcomes, experiment with techniques, measure outcomes, and improve teaching. A further intent is to encourage and inspire other faculty to employ similar strategies or develop new classroom assessment models through professional dialogue.

A maximum of 20 grant awards – ten to full-time and ten to adjunct faculty members – are available each semester. After proposals are submitted to campus provosts, a committee of faculty, staff, and administrators selects recipients based on the degree to which the proposals assess student achievement and their potential to improve teaching and learning.

Mini-grant recipients submit abstracts for publication in the College's official newsletter, the *Bulletin*, as well as full reports that are available in campus libraries. Regularly scheduled campus forums provide opportunities for scholarly dialogue. Once each five years, during the Level II Program Review process, faculty peers recognize mini-grant accomplishments in their disciplines and, where applicable, determine how they can contribute to departmental change.

In the first two semesters of the program, 24 full-time and adjunct faculty members were awarded 18 mini-grants for classroom research projects. An additional 15 faculty participated in those projects. Ten more faculty have been awarded mini-grants for Spring 1994. All recipients are encouraged to continue their projects into future semesters, and they are eligible to apply for awards for this purpose.

General Education Curriculum Designation

A comprehensive curriculum review that began in 1988 has resulted in clearly specified general education requirements in every degree program and some certificate programs. Designated skills have been identified with certain whole courses and as components of other courses in degree programs.

Procedures are now in place to ensure actual attainment of required skills in certain courses. The General

Education Course Designation process requires that faculty who introduce new courses for general education credit identify appropriate outcomes on the curriculum approval form and describe the means by which they will be measured. In occupational programs, the DACUM process (described in the next section) includes general education skills specific to occupations among required course and degree outcomes.

Occupational Curriculum Renewal Using The DACUM Process

Occupational programs at Pima Community College are undergoing extensive curriculum renewal that incorporates learning outcomes into courses and programs. The Office of Occupational Education coordinates this effort and provides information and assistance to program faculty who design the courses and degree programs. The renewed curricula will enable occupational program areas to generate data for a number of important institutional applications, including student outcomes assessment, general education, program review, and compliance with the Perkins Act.

Current curriculum development in occupational areas is accompished chiefly through an occupational analysis process known as DACUM (for Developing A CUrriculuM). In this procedure a panel of successful practitioners in a given occupation assist program faculty by identifying specific skills needed in the occupation as a basis for developing learning objectives and competencies for the curriculum.

DACUM charts describing the specific tasks required for each occupation may also be used for student counseling and recruitment, training needs assessment, worker performance evaluation, competency test development, and job descriptions.

The following occupational programs have already used the DACUM analysis to update their curriculum:

- Administrative Assistant
- CNC Machinist
- Environmental Technologist
- General Office Aide
- Secretary
- Technologist

At least five additional programs will have been analyzed by the end of the current academic year.

DACUM reviews occur in addition to regular meetings of community advisory groups for each occupational area. These advisory groups usually meet at least once each year, suggesting changes in curriculum, textbooks, and equipment to keep instruction current.

The DACUM process is described in the IEP. More detailed descriptions of the process and task charts for the six curricula cited above will be available to the NCA Evaluation Team during the Focused Visit.

Program and Service Review

The Program and Service Review process, described in the IEP and the NCA Focused Evaluation Report, has contributed to the development of a Student Outcomes Assessment Program in three important ways: 1) it has helped to identify and make available types of institutional data needed by faculty and staff to improve educational services, 2) it provides a regular forum for faculty and administrative analysis of outcomes information, and 3) it serves as a reporting mechanism for results of various assessment activities, such as classroom research, DACUM processes, and transfer student studies.

As part of the Level I Program and Service Review process, departmental faculty receive institutional data

on student outcomes annually. Campus administrators review faculty responses to these data, and together they make adjustments in planning and budgeting as resources permit. Level II reviews every five years include the annual Level I data, additional Level II institutional data, and in most cases further outcomes data provided by departmental faculty and students. Level II reports include recommendations and action plans for improvement.

Program and Service Review for student development and instructional support services is not as complete as the review processes for academic and occupational programs. Student development and instructional support staffs have been collecting some Level I data for three years, but full definitions of required data elements are still pending. The completion of a College barcoding project will lead to a refinement of the service review process for these areas. In the meantime, Level II reviews – which are primarily qualitative in nature – have occurred and are scheduled for these services.

The NCA Focused Visit Report in section II describes major improvements, all with a direct impact on instruction, resulting from Level II reviews between 1991 and 1993. They include $570,000 in capital equipment, realignment of two high-tech programs to improve their quality, facilities modifications on every campus, six new faculty positions, and significant changes in course offerings and degree programs.

Student Information System Data

In addition to collecting basic student data to support everyday operations and the aforementioned student outcomes assessment processes, the Office of Institutional Research also conducts special studies to provide information for specific College offices or projects. Several completed studies with important implications for student outcomes assessment have been incorporated into the Student Outcomes Assessment Program. They will all be continued on a regular basis, although the frequency of each is still under discussion. These studies are listed below. Additional major studies, some of which are still in progress, are described briefly at the end of this section.

Copies of the reports on all the studies cited in this section will be available to the NCA Evaluation Team during the Focused Visit.

Minority Student Retention and Transfer Study

In March 1993, the College published *A Longitudinal Study of Minority Student Retention and Transfer Success.* The study, funded by a PCC Minority Education Initiative Fund grant, followed a cohort of 5,819 first-time PCC students in Fall 1988 through the next four years. Its purpose was to determine the retention, completion, and transfer rates of the 2,170 minority participants and to compare their success (using eight indicators) to that of the non-minority students during that period.

Because it used comparative data throughout, the study also tracked the success of the participating non-minority students, of international students, and of the entire cohort. Its applications to student outcomes assessment, therefore, are not limited to any group or groups. Thus this project is regarded as the College's first major longitudinal study of student success.

The executive summary of the study report draws useful conclusions about the performance of both the minority students and the entire cohort, but it also observes that the full significance of much of the data is unclear without further information.

At this point, the results of the retention and transfer student study are primarily diagnostic, providing clues to areas requiring further investigation. Beginning in February 1994, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Development will meet with campus deans to analyze the study report in detail, looking for patterns and anomalies that require attention. Results that can be applied to improvement activities immediately will be sent to appropriate offices and individuals for their action.

The Office of Minority Education and Multidisciplinary Educational Services will monitor the activities and prepare annual status reports. The first report, describing applications of information from this study and suggesting further applications, will be provided to the department chairs as they evaluate and revise the current program during 1994/95. Information from the annual reports will be used for evaluation within departments and student support offices during Program and Service Review.

University of Arizona/PCC Concurrent Enrollment Study

During the Spring 1993 semester, the PCC Office of Research and Planning and the University of Arizona (UA) Center for Research on Undergraduate Education collaborated on a study of students who were concurrently enrolled at the two institutions. The purposes of the study were to 1) identify those factors which motivate UA students to take courses at PCC; 2) identify the role of UA and PCC advisors, faculty members, and students in students' decisions to take courses at PCC; 3) determine the level of satisfaction with courses taken by UA students at PCC; and 4) document any additional factors which may affect the educational experience of concurrently enrolled undergraduate students.

Of the 2,255 concurrently enrolled students that semester, 500 were randomly selected for telephone interviews and 393 were actually interviewed by the UA or PCC research staffs.

Besides providing an executive summary of the survey results, the report includes a provocative discussion of the potential implications for College planning under the following topics:

- Student expectations
- Concurrent enrollment is not incidental
- Enrollment management concerns
- Minority success
- East Campus attendance patterns
- Relationship between courses taken and motivation for attending PCC
- Higher education at bargain rates
- Homework: What is its role in student learning?
- Class Size and Comfortable Class Atmosphere – Proxies for Quality

The results of this recent study are also primarily diagnostic and will be analyzed by College planners, including the campus deans with the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Development, in early 1994. Information that can be applied immediately will again be forwarded to the appropriate parties, and a status report will be submitted, with recommendations, to the department chairs during 1994/95.

Employer Surveys

A. 1992 Employer Needs Assessment

A survey of Pima County employers was conducted in Fall 1992 to assess their training needs, employment needs, and opinions about Pima Community College. A stratified sample of 759 employers (with 329 responding) from specific occupational groups were surveyed to provide information for several purposes, including Program and Service Review, the development of new instructional programs, and marketing.

The executive summary of the overall report included the following conclusions:

- PCC is doing a very good job of meeting the business community's needs, and employers who were familiar with the College's services rated most of them very good.
- The College needs to increase its efforts to familiarize employers with its lesser known resources.

- Knowledge and skill areas most valued by employers include: 1) quality of employees' work, 2) having a positive attitude toward work, 3) following directions, 4) working as a member of a team, 5) oral communication, 6) completing tasks in a timely manner, 7) punctuality, and 8) applying knowledge and skills.
- Because PCC is presently unable to meet more than 10 percent of the typical employer's total training needs, there may be additional opportunities for the College to offer training programs to meet those needs.
- The respondents believe that PCC can better meet their needs by providing graduates with more hands-on experiences, such as co-op classes and internships. Employers also indicated that graduates need better communication skills and good work ethics.

Separate reports were also compiled in the following eight major employment areas (with the number of employer respondents in parentheses):

- Business Administration (21)
- Computer Science (36)
- Dental Auxiliary (25)
- Gerontology (60)
- Nursing (25)
- Office Education (109)
- Real Estate (21)
- Welding (23)

Besides ratings of satisfaction with the College's services, these reports contain useful information, specific to each area, about future demand for particular jobs, types of knowledge and skills most valued by employers, and their highest training needs.

Copies of the overall report and the separate employment area reports have been sent to the Office of Occupational Education and to faculty in the related occupational programs. Information will be analyzed and improvement actions taken within those departments, and results will be monitored through program review activities.

B. Employer Satisfaction Survey

The Institutional Research Office has completed a study entitled *1992 Employer Assessments of Recent Pima Community College Graduates.* The study was based on a Fall 1992 survey that asked 125 Pima County employers to assess the on-the-job performance of recent PCC graduates from selected instructional programs. A total of 91 employers responded.

The survey was designed to provide useful information for efforts to improve instructional programs, especially those undergoing Program and Services Review. Three program areas – registered nursing, practical nursing, and business administration – were represented in large enough numbers to benefit from the findings. However, it must be noted that only those graduates giving permission for their supervisors to be contacted were included in the study.

The executive summary of the survey report concluded that:

- Overall, recent graduates of the selected PCC programs are performing adeptly in the work place, and more than 90 percent of them were employed in jobs that are either directly related or somewhat related to their training at PCC.

- The graduates' performances were rated as "very good" in most of the areas assessed. Also, their work knowledge and skills were rated somewhat higher than were their general education knowledge and abilities. This finding corresponded with the expectations of employers as reported in the 1992 Employer Needs Assessment results.
- Respondents who supervise nursing graduates recommended that PCC can better meet their needs through providing more training in specific skill areas and more hands-on training, such as practicums and clinical internships.

The study report made a number of recommendations to implement instructional improvement and to guide future research, including the following:

- That nursing faculty and campus administrators, when revising program curricula, consider the suggestion to provide more training in specific skills and hands-on training,
- That future studies sample graduates from a broader variety of programs to ensure that PCC graduates' performance levels are uniformly high across programs,
- That the same supervisors be surveyed again at a later date to determine whether the graduates' performance levels increase, decrease, or stay the same, and
- That a future study be conducted to relate graduates' job performance with their academic performance at PCC in order to help predict future job performance, assist in student advising, and provide additional support for selected students.

Copies of the employer satisfaction report have been sent to the Office of Occupational Education and to faculty in all the related occupational programs. Analysis and improvement activities will occur in the three program areas that can benefit from the findings, and results will be monitored through program review activities.

Graduate Satisfaction Surveys

The College conducts an annual survey of each graduating class. This survey provides written comments to open-ended questions in the following categories: 1) outstanding features of PCC, 2) areas/services needing improvements, and 3) other suggestions/comments. Comments on these surveys have been notable for their frankness. Generally they both confirm the College's recognized strengths and reveal problems needing immediate attention.

In the past, graduate survey results have been summarized by the institutional research office and distributed to administrators for follow-up action. Within the Student Outcomes Assessment Program, campus and District Central Office administrators are expected to distribute the summary results to department chairpersons and other appropriate offices for analysis and report changes to improve services annually.

Other Studies

A number of major studies are underway or have been completed but not yet incorporated into the formal outcomes assessment program. These include the following:

The 1992-93 Graduates and Completers Summary was recently issued as the latest in an annual series. It summarizes information about PCC students who received a degree or certificate during the 1992-93 academic year, including Summer 1992. The information is categorized by type of degree or certificate, instructional program, ethnicity, and gender. The latest report, for the first time, includes an executive summary.

Besides the employer needs surveys conducted by the Office of Institutional Research (listed above under Employer Surveys), the Office of Occupational Education has undertaken employment studies in other

occupational program areas. Two of these studies have been completed. The first – in computer science and electronics – is assisting the program faculty with strategic planning leading to curriculum renewal. The second will provide similar assistance to faculty in interior design. A third study is underway, and a fourth is on the drawing board.

The Office of Occupational Education is also conducting a study of General Education Communication Tasks for Occupational Graduates. This study, with the help of a panel of employers, has produced a chart of general education communications tasks for mastery by PCC occupational graduates for employment in the twenty-first century. The General Education Committee has been given the charge of developing requirements to incorporate the skills required by these tasks into all occupational curricula.

A third major project of the Office of Occupational Education is a major three-phase study using eight disciplines that are basic to technology to develop core curriculum for all technological programs. Panels consisting of faculty from PCC, the University of Arizona, and secondary schools have completed the first phase by identifying key concepts in the core disciplines. In the second phase, practitioners from 13 different technologies will explain how they use those concepts, and phase three will use information in a data base to compile reports for various applications, including curriculum development.

At the request of the Office of Minority Education and Multidisciplinary Educational Services, the Office of Institutional Research is conducting a significant longitudinal study of developmental education at Pima Community College. The study follows the same cohort group of students as the completed retention and transfer student study (described above) from 1988 to the present. The students are classified as full-time or part-time and by ethnicity and gender. Data is included on assessment tests taken, enrollment and grades in courses, programs taken, and time needed for completion.

Faculty and administrators will use the information from the developmental study as a starting point in readdressing the issues of assessment testing and developmental education in the College. The study report is expected to suggest increased cooperation between community agencies and the College, possibly leading to innovative educational offerings for adults needing basic skills. In addition, information on students taking English as a Second Language will assist College and community representatives who have begun to meet for revitalizing the College's ESL offerings.

All of the studies mentioned above will be included in the Student Outcomes Assessment Program before it is evaluated and revised by the College faculty through the process described in the next major section, "Expanding and Improving the Student Outcomes Assessment Program." As they are prepared, reports will be distributed to program faculty, student development staff, and other appropriate personnel for analysis and application to improvement activities.

Copies of reports for both the completed studies cited above and those that will be completed before the Focused Visit will be made available to the NCA Evaluation Team during the Focused Visit.

Summary and Analysis

Pima Community College has established a Student Outcomes Assessment Program consisting of several substantial improvement programs that together speak to all instructional areas and many direct services to students. The outcomes assessment program, together with the plans to expand and improve it, is a major component of the College's Institutional Effectiveness Program, and it provides the principal means of measuring the College's success in carrying out its mission. The program combines recently established data sources and assessment activities with long-standing ones, using multiple measures to assess teaching and learning.

The initial program, because it consists primarily of drawing together results from existing assessment activities, unifying them under a single purpose, and identifying responsibilities for their implementation,

was developed by the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Development, with the advice and assistance of an inter-campus steering committee.

New components, like the Classroom Research Mini-Grant Program and the DACUM process, were added either to strengthen existing assessment efforts or to involve faculty directly in essential activities. Beyond designing, supporting, and publicizing the initial program, the present effort is aimed at planning for future improvements.

Supporting The Student Outcomes Assessment Program

Managing Outcomes Data and Assessment Results

A vital component of the PCC Student Outcomes Assessment Program is the dissemination of research results to appropriate constituencies in the institution. Recognizing the critical importance of this aspect of the assessment program, the Chancellor asked the Office of Research and Planning in June 1993 to establish a committee which would undertake the following charge:

- review and recommend institutional research objectives;
- recommend annually to the Chancellor's Cabinet priorities among competing needs considering the most effective utilization of research results and in light of College resources;
- examine current research activities and dissemination of research results;
- ensure that research contributes to decision-making processes; and
- serve as an information clearinghouse for research activities.

This committee, entitled the College Research and Information Steering Committee (CRISCO), is chaired by the Senior Assistant to the Chancellor for Research and Planning. The committee's membership composition is designed to ensure that the issues addressed by the committee receive attention from the highest levels in the College. Its membership is composed of the Vice Chancellor, a representative from the Provost's group, representatives from the Deans of Instruction and the Deans of Student Development groups, the Assistant Vice Chancellors for Fiscal Services, Human Resources, Administrative Services and Facilities, and Academic Affairs and Student Development, and the Senior Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Policy and Information Services.

This committee met on a bi-weekly basis for several months, and now meets approximately every three to four weeks. Among the most significant of its recommendations is the modification of a previously existing user group structure to the establishment of information user groups in the critical areas of student information, human resources, fiscal services, and procurement. The user groups are intended to be a systematic way for the institution to gather feedback from both principal and secondary users of College information systems.

User groups will examine the processes and procedures comprising the transactional systems of the College; recommend specific modifications or development to these processes and procedures; receive and provide education and training to users regarding existing data systems and access/utilization opportunities; review the information needs within their system(s) and recommend development needs to CRISCO; and help plan, monitor, and evaluate the development of information systems authorized by the Chancellor's Cabinet. The user group concept was approved by the Chancellor's Cabinet in Fall 1993; implementation of the pilot phase will occur in the Spring 1994, with full implementation in Fall 1994 so that recommendations can be factored into annual budget development deliberations.

Another significant achievement of CRISCO has been the recommendation that Computer Services proceed with the development of an easy-to-use Executive Decision Support "information harvesting" system which will allow administrators and the faculty to access a variety of data resident in the College's information systems. Work on this long-term project has begun; substantial completion is scheduled for Spring 1995.

Publicizing Student Outcomes Assessment

In order to reach all segments of the College, which is comprised of five campuses and a District Central Office, multiple means are being used to publicize the Student Outcomes Assessment Program and related student outcomes assessment activities. These include the following:

A Multi-Dimensional Publicity Campaign. The following activities are included:

- During the Fall 1993 semester, a series of articles in the College *Bulletin* covered all five components of the Institutional Effectiveness Program; these included a detailed explanation of the College's plans for student outcomes assessment, announcements of classroom mini-grant deadlines and recipients, and summaries of classroom research reports.
- During the same period, colorful fliers featuring brief messages on separate elements of student outcomes assessment were distributed semi-weekly to faculty mailboxes on all campuses.
- Early in the Spring 1994 semester, large display boards were installed on each campus and at the district central offices. These boards carry brief highlights of institutional effectiveness activities, including outcomes related to mission success indicators, classroom research, and program reviews. Display items are rotated periodically to feature diverse achievements and remain timely.

Widespread Distribution Of Document Drafts And Finished Documents. The Institutional Effectiveness Program document and the NCA Evaluation Visit Report for the focused visit – both of which include sections on Student Outcomes Assessment – were circulated widely in draft form. Copies for review were sent to all members of the Faculty Council, the Staff Council, the Chancellor's Cabinet and other administrative groups, Student Government leaders, and the NCA Resource Team, which includes more than 100 College personnel. Copies were also placed in campus libraries, with announcements in the College *Bulletin*. Finished documents will be sent to the governance groups named above, campus and district administrative offices, the NCA Resource Team, and campus libraries. All College employees have received a brochure outlining the features of Institutional Effectiveness at Pima Community College. In addition, every full-time faculty member will receive a copy of the formal Student Outcomes Assessment Plan.

Meetings With Governance Groups. Members of the Vice Chancellor's staff met with the governance groups in the spring of 1993 to explain the significance of the Institutional Effectiveness Program, including the Student Outcomes Assessment Program that was being developed. During the review process, the same groups were visited to explain the documents and answer questions.

Campus Forums On Classroom Research Projects. Every semester following the completion of classroom mini-grant projects, the grant recipients present their findings in reports and meet with campus colleagues for professional dialogue. Besides the report summaries appearing in the *Bulletin*, the complete reports are made available in campus libraries.

Special Involvement Of Members Of The NCA Resource Team. This large body of College leaders, including some students and community members, though it does not meet as a group, is kept informed of activities in preparation for the NCA Focused Visit. Members have provided valuable critiques of draft documents and have been asked to keep their colleagues informed on Student Outcomes Assessment and related issues.

Meetings With An NCA Associate Director. Leaders from many of the representative groups named above attended meetings with Dr. Mary Breslin during her two-day visit in October 1993 to ask questions and engage in dialogue on student outcomes assessment and other topics related to the focused evaluation.

Academic Department Reorganization. The Chancellor has informed the special faculty advisory group on department reorganization and faculty members at campus forums that department chairs in the new organization will be expected to provide faculty leadership in developing and conducting student outcomes assessment activities.

Annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports. These will present outcomes from the five components of the Institutional Effectiveness Program, including Student Outcomes assessment.

Summary and Analysis

Although Student Outcomes Assessment is the last of the Institutional Effectiveness Program activities to be formalized, it has been brought to the attention of faculty members and other College personnel through a variety of means. Another wave of publicity will occur when the entire series of IEP publications is distributed beginning in early February 1994 and again just before the March focused visit. Further efforts will be made to sustain interest and increase participation in Student Outcomes Assessment leading up to the broadly based outcomes activities in 1994/95.

Expanding And Improving The Student Outcomes Assessment Program

College department chairs will provide academic leadership in evaluating the present Student Outcomes Assessment Program and setting the direction for its evolution into a comprehensive, self-renewing improvement program. This effort will benefit from a strategic opportunity provided by a major reorganization of academic departments, including a reappraisal of the role of department chairs, expected to be fully implemented for the 1994/95 academic year. Discussions between the Chancellor and a faculty advisory group have clearly earmarked a leadership role for department chairs in student outcomes assessment. Newly appointed chairs in Fall 1994 will participate in ongoing professional development activities that will include sessions on outcomes assessment issues and strategies to prepare them for the duties described below.

Evaluating and Revising the Initial Program

The chairs of the newly configured departments, with the assistance of campus deans, will lead their faculty colleagues in achieving the following:

- By May 1995, they will evaluate the initial Student Outcomes Assessment Program in light of the College mission, then recommend ways to improve the program.
- By December 1995, they will develop criteria for programs and subject areas to produce departmental student outcomes assessment plans. These criteria will establish minimum expectations, ensure consistency with the College program, and encourage development of assessment activities suited to the unique needs of programs or disciplines. They will promote multiple assessment measures and will avoid prescribing a single approach for all departments.
- By May 1995, departments will design student outcomes assessment plans that are aligned with the College program and responsive to specific instructional program or discipline missions. The plans will define expected student outcomes and select appropriate activities to measure them. Finally, they will describe how the results will be used to improve learning.

  While preparing outcomes assessment plans, faculty will identify needs for student services in their disciplines and communicate these to campus student development and instructional support personnel. These services will then use the information to develop student outcomes assessment plans for their respective units during the same time frame.

  Campus faculty and staff who develop student outcomes assessment plans will be expected to involve student representatives at the program, subject area or student support service level.
- They will pilot the departmental outcomes assessment plans during the 1996/97 academic year, revise them, and fully implement them in 1997/98.

Institutionalizing the Program

During the pilot year, the department chairs will develop guidelines for incorporating individual program and subject area plans, as well as provisions to review these plans, into the Level II Program and Service Review cycle. This will ensure that departmental faculty and staff will, at least once every five years, 1) review the results of student outcomes assessment activities tied to each plan and apply them to improvements, and 2) evaluate and update the plans.

In 1998/99 and every five years thereafter, the Chancellor's Cabinet will charge the department chairs, or a

representative group, with evaluating and updating the entire Student Outcomes Assessment Program. This will include reviews of:

- the adequacy and effectiveness of student outcomes assessment activities at every level of the College,
- the relationship between the College Student Outcomes Assessment Program and the specific plans for programs and subject areas,
- the adequacy and appropriateness of institutional research data to serve both levels of assessment, and
- the degree of understanding by students and participating members of the College.

This timeline will ensure that the first comprehensive review will be completed in time for inclusion in the next NCA Institutional Self-Study. The five-year intervals will align this review with the Level II Program and Service Review, comprehensive mission review, and College planning cycles.

Administrative responsibility for all the assessment activities in this section of the plan will be assumed by the Chancellor's Cabinet. Coordination and assistance to department chairs and deans will be provided by the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Development.

The aforementioned evaluation and updating of the Student Outcomes Assessment Program will be supported by a newly created position, that of Director of Assessment Information and Technology. This position is presently in the recruitment phase. The position will function to plan, review, and evaluate the student outcomes assessment program, provide overall leadership and direction for College assessment policy involving psychometric systems, and direct the development of information systems for student outcomes assessment and program evaluation. The position will report to the Office of Institutional Research but advise the Vice Chancellor, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Development, campus provosts, and outside regulatory agencies regarding institutional effectiveness issues and programs. It is anticipated that decisions recommended by this position will impact policies and procedures involving assessment, placement, outcomes, curriculum and instruction, student services, and organizational processes based on the interpretation of data gathered.

Summary and Analysis

Faculty involvement in the design of the initial Student Outcomes Assessment Program, which consists largely of assessment activities that were already in place, occurred primarily through an intercampus steering committee. At the same time, faculty participation in the assessment activities themselves has increased substantially since the introduction of Program and Service Review and, more recently, the Provosts' Classroom Research Mini-Grant Program. Plans to revise and improve the Student Outcomes Assessment Program provide for the faculty to assume ownership of the College Student Outcomes Assessment Program by reviewing and redirecting the initial program and by periodically evaluating and updating subsequent programs. Through the leadership of department chairs in reorganized departments, faculty from every discipline on every campus will participate in some student outcomes assessment activities.

Conclusion: Overall Summary and Analysis

Pima Community College has instituted a substantial Student Outcomes Assessment Program, which was produced by joining numerous outcomes assessment activities already in place with newly designed components. The program is a natural extension of several recent initiatives to improve institutional effectiveness. The initial design of the program was produced by the administration with the advice of an intercampus steering committee consisting of faculty, students, and a campus dean as chair.

The Student Outcomes Assessment plan includes provisions to support the program through improving the management of outcomes data and assessment results and then to expand and improve the program through the participation of faculty under the leadership of department chairs and deans. Timelines have been developed and administrative responsibilities assigned to ensure that:

- the initial College program is evaluated and revised in 1995,
- outcomes assessment plans are developed for instructional programs and disciplines and student support services for piloting in 1996/97 and full implementation in 1997/98, and
- during the same period, outcomes assessment plans on all levels are fully integrated into a College program that is constantly monitored and periodically renewed.

The College administration believes that the plan described in this document addresses the expectations of the North Central Association Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. This can be demonstrated by examining the elements of the plan in light of the five categories suggested by the Commission, as follows:

Relationship of the Plan to the Mission, Goals, and Objectives of the Institution

All the components of the present program were developed to strengthen one or more major element of the College mission. This is made evident by the organization and content of the Institutional Effectiveness Program (IEP) which defines the College's highest priorities. Although the initial outcomes assessment program was intentionally designed to include mostly existing assessment activities, new components were added partially to broaden the scope of assessment activities in relation to the mission. Most notably, the Provosts' Classroom Research Mini-Grant Program directly addresses the commitment to creative and effective teaching. Future steps within the plan include provisions to revisit student development issues, including assessment testing and developmental education, in order to strengthen the student services and developmental learning components of the mission.

A unique and highly visible feature of the IEP is the mission review process, which employs Mission Success Indicators to tie both the mission to the community and the College to the mission. The indicators were identified jointly by College personnel and community representatives to monitor progress in all essential mission components.

Evidence that the Institution's Plan Is Articulated and Institution-wide in Conceptualization and Scope

The initial program, coming on the heels of substantial improvement initiatives, including Program and Service Review, was developed with faculty and student participation through a representative steering committee. The plan provides for full involvement of the faculty beginning in the Fall 1994 semester. Faculty at that time will not only participate in outcomes assessment activities as they have done in the past, but will also provide direction for the program as it continues to evolve. This direction will be led by department chairs as a committee of the whole, ensuring institution-wide participation, and will involve students at the program or subject area level, campus administrators, and those staff members who play active roles in student services.

Degree programs, general education, and occupational skills components are already strongly represented in the assessment program, and the plan provides for reconsideration of basic skills measures. The College has found numerous ways to apply an extensive and continually growing Student Information System to outcomes assessment activities. Major studies are in place to measure student success after graduation both at the major transfer institution (i.e., University of Arizona) and on the job. In expanding the program, faculty will be asked to consider extending graduate outcomes studies to other four-year institutions in the state.

Relationship of the Plan to Institutional Improvement

Each of the major components of the Student Outcomes Assessment Program carries a clearly defined analysis and feedback loop. In most cases, follow-through activities are conducted by department faculty and student development faculty and staff within Program and Service Review. Consequently, this process will be the principal means of ensuring that improvement takes place in educational programs and processes. The ability of both Program and Service Review participants and other responsible parties to measure outcomes and effect improvements will be increased as more surveys are repeated and longitudinal studies established.

The Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Development is charged with ensuring that newly installed components, such as recently completed studies in the Student Information System data component, are assigned to the appropriate units for analysis and feedback. That office is also responsible for identifying needs to continue institution-wide surveys and other outcomes studies and scheduling them through the CRISCO committee.

Timetable for Implementing the Plan

The timetable for implementing the plan has been shaped by four primary considerations: 1) the relationship of the program to the other major improvement activities in the IEP and to recently completed institutional outcomes studies, which largely determined the starting date for the program, 2) preparation for the NCA Focused Visit, which has provided a time-frame for conceptualizing the plan, initiating the program, and completing planning activities, 3) the impending completion of the department reorganization, which will permit the implementation of plans for improving and expanding the program to begin in the Fall 1994 semester, and 4) the schedule for the next NCA Comprehensive Evaluation, which has provided a target date for a fully developed program capable of self-renewal.

The College administration believes that the timetable in the plan is reasonable and represents an appropriate balance between institutional needs and the workloads of faculty and other College personnel.

Administration of the Plan

The rationale for the timing of the shift of primary responsibility for the plan from a district central office working with a representative committee to a faculty department chair committee of the whole was explained above. Primary administrative responsibility for monitoring the continuing program will also shift from the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Student Development to the Chancellor's Cabinet, which is composed primarily of the campus provosts, when the department chairs assume the leadership role.

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